

# **Research vs. Practice: How Are Our Schools Setup?**

**Jonnie Welbourn**

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An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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April 5, 2005

Expected Date of Graduation  
May 2005

## **Abstract**

Many of the teaching practices, in our elementary schools, have been controversial issues for years. Two major issues are the use of ability grouping, as well as the use of self-contained classrooms versus departmentalized classrooms. A great deal of research has been performed on both of these topics. Despite the research that has been carried out, it is not certain that the correct practices are being followed. To address this, I have provided a description of the research that has been done, and follow up with the results of a survey. This survey determines what practices are being used by teachers, and analyzes whether or not these practices are following what research results recommends.

## **Acknowledgements**

- I would like to thank Dr. Claudia McVicker for being my advisor on this project. She helped me to follow the appropriate guidelines and was always available when I had questions.

The field of education is constantly changing and being modified based on new ideas and research. Over the years, many different methods of teaching and grouping have been experimented with. The goal of these methods has always been to provide students with the opportunity for the best possible education. Research generally focuses on what provides students with higher achievement. Also, there is a concern in providing students with the appropriate setting to support their emotional and social development. Although ideas are constantly changing, up-to-date research permits the instructor to stay better prepared at providing children with an education that will support their emotional, social, and intellectual development. However, the research is not beneficial, if it is not implemented into schools. Are schools following the standards that are recommended through research, or are old methods that research has proven not to be efficient being practiced?

Many issues, such as class size, technology use, and extra assistance in the classroom are difficult to address, because they are dependent on funding and necessary facilities. However, there are some issues, such as those that deal with classroom organization, that are controlled by the school administration, and possibly by the teachers. There are two principal units of classroom organization that this survey will reflect upon. One is the use of self-contained classrooms versus departmentalized classrooms. The second is ability grouping. In the past, a great deal of research has been conducted on these areas of concern.

The following information explains self-contained, departmentalized, and ability grouping, as well as summarizes the research that has been done on these topics. Based

on this information, the evidence collected for this research will reveal the practices being employed by schools in the local area.

### Self-Contained vs. Departmentalized

A self-contained classroom can have several different definitions, depending on the context in which it is used. For the purpose of this paper, a self-contained classroom is one in which the same group of students receive instruction from the same teacher the entire day. Students do not change classes. The same teacher will be the instructor for language arts, math, social studies, and science. The only classes that pupils may leave the room for and have different instructors for, are those that are considered ‘special classes’. These include physical education, music, and possibly art (Maine Department of Education, 2004).

A departmentalized classroom is one in which students change classes and have various teachers for separate subject areas. There are multiple ways that this can be done. One example is a class that has one instructor for language arts and a second instructor for math, social studies, and science. Another example is a class that has a homeroom teacher for language arts, and then changes for each of the content area classes. This is a common practice used in high school classrooms (Ediger, 1994).

There are several advantages to the self-contained and to the departmentalized classroom setting. One of the main advantages, in a self-contained classroom, is that this setting allows a better relationship to form between the teacher and the student. The student sees the teacher frequently and is more likely to trust him/her. This, also, allows the instructor to know the students better, which can aide in planning. By being knowledgeable about the student, the teacher can better prepare according to individual

learning abilities. Through this, the teacher is also inclined to be more familiar with the parents, because there are fewer of them to communicate with. This creates easier relationships with parents, and can be useful during parent-teacher conferences (Ediger, 1994).

A second advantage is that it is easier to take an interdisciplinary approach and make connections between subjects in a self-contained classroom (Ediger, 1994). When one instructor is teaching the complete curriculum, it is easier to adjust schedules and plans to allow for integration to take place. For example, a teacher may require that students write a persuasive letter in connection to a social studies lesson. In the self-contained classroom, the instructor could use writing time for this project and still have social studies to cover new content. In the departmentalized setting, if this is even possible, it would be difficult to plan between classes and teachers.

In addition, in this setting, a teacher has more time and opportunity with one group of students to allow them to work in a variety of groupings (Ediger, 2002). Students may be placed into a diverse number of groups, and into groups with a variety of class members. Although this would be possible in a departmentalized setting, it would be difficult to plan and carry out. This is because time spent on group work would be limited in this setting. Also, an instructor would have less knowledge of the students, making it difficult to organize groups that would perform well together and be effective.

While there are several advantages to self-contained classrooms, departmentalized classrooms also have benefits. One being when planning and teaching for only one or two subjects, the instructor may be more knowledgeable and more prepared to teach those topics (Ediger, 2002). Having fewer subjects to plan for can create the desirable

time for preparation of these subjects. Furthermore, if the instructor is teaching a subject that is of particular interest to them, there will be a more enthusiastic approach concerning the material that is being taught (Ediger, 2002). This, in turn, develops a more enthusiastic reaction within the classroom.

A second perceived advantage to using departmentalization, in the elementary grades, is that it is currently being used in high schools. Placing students into a departmentalized setting in the early stages of education yields the needed preparation for the upcoming high school experiences (Chan and Jarman, 2004). Making connections between subjects in this setting is difficult, but not impossible. To achieve this connection, instructors would collaborate across the grade level to plan lessons that would provide integration between the subjects. While working together to create lessons and a timeframe, even though the students are changing classes, a common theme is perceived throughout (Chan and Jarman, 2004).

Self-contained versus departmentalized is an issue that has been controversial for many years. Studies were done regarding this during the sixties, seventies, eighties, nineties, and currently. Two recent works depict what is commonly seen in all of these studies. The first study, conducted in 1996, was based on the results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and focused on reading achievement. The control group (self-contained classroom) in this study revealed scores that were consistently higher than those in the experimental group (departmentalized classroom) (Harris, 1996).

The second study was conducted in 2002 by Carole McGrath and James Rust. This was accomplished in Tennessee and was based on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program. The results obtained were from fifth and sixth graders in both self-

contained and departmentalized classrooms. These revealed that the students in the self-contained classrooms did better in Total Battery, Language, and Science. No significant differences were found, between the two groups, in Reading, Math, or Social Studies. However, the results do favor the self-contained classroom for higher achievement. An interesting point, in this study, was that while transition times in self-contained classrooms were much shorter, there was not a significant difference in instructional time, between the self-contained and departmentalized classrooms. It is noted that this was probably caused by use of computer lab, art, and other activities in the self-contained classes. (McGrath and Rust, 2002)

As can be seen, in each of these studies, self-contained classrooms appear to be the better setting for elementary students and provides them with the best opportunity for higher achievement. They also allow the students to form stronger, more trusting relationships with their teachers.

### Ability Grouping

Ability grouping and tracking are two terms that are often used to signify the same thing. Ability grouping basically means that students are grouped into homogeneous classrooms. This is placing them into classrooms with other students that are on the same level as they are on (Nicholson, 1998). There is generally a low group, a middle group, and a high group. In the past, homogeneous grouping has been advocated, because it was believed that students would do better in classes with others of the same ability. However, some have advocated that by placing higher ability and lower ability



students together allows the lower ability students greater insight and ability to achieve (Petrello, 2000). Again, as with self-contained and departmentalized classrooms, ability grouping has been a highly controversial part of education for many years.

Through a careful examination of the research on ability grouping, it is concluded that there are few advantages for this setting in a classroom. One possible advantage is that when classes are ability grouped, the curriculum can be adapted to each separate ability level. The main benefit of this would be that planning is made easier for the instructor. And, the need to plan for a wide range of ability levels in one class is eliminated (Nicholson, 1998).

A second, possible advantage of ability grouping is that it may facilitate the learning of higher ability students. In ability grouping, the higher level students are placed together, which gives them the capacity to work at their own pace and not be held back by the lower ability students. In addition, there is the belief that ability grouping could provide more attention for the lower ability students (Mills, 1998). Studies indicate, however, that the high ability students are not held back when heterogeneously grouped, and that classroom environment is more important than the grouping of the classroom. Therefore, material that is presented interestingly and enthusiastically has more impact than the grouping. A study by Robert Slavin and Robert Stevens showed that the reading and writing achievement of students was greater in non-ability grouped classes, than in all levels of ability grouped classes (Wheelock, 1992).

These are two benefits that have been cited for ability grouping. There is no evidence to support either of these, and, in actuality, studies have been done to disprove them. The belief that ability grouping will help raise low-ability students' self-esteem

has also been mentioned as an advantage. However, this is another situation in which a perceived advantage has actually been proven inaccurate. It is possible that ability grouping can, in reality, harm a student's self-esteem. Ability grouping creates inaccurate stereotypes among students and can be seen to create a class system within the school (Lindle, 1994).

Students placed in a low ability group classroom are more likely to be delinquent, and drop out, than students placed in middle and high ability groups (Braddock and Slavin, 1992). Furthermore, ability grouping is inclined to cause segregation in classrooms. The National Educational Longitudinal Survey, conducted in 1988, showed that African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and low-income eighth graders were twice as likely as upper-income and white students to be placed in remedial classes (Wheelock, 1992).

According to Nicholson (1998), instructors have a tendency to underestimate the capability of the low-ability students and, therefore, set lower expectations for these pupils. As in a self-fulfilling prophesy, these students often perform at the level that is expected of them. A study by Reuman in 1989 revealed that ability grouping raised the grades and expectations of high achievers, but lowered the grades and expectations of the low ability class (Nicholson, 1998).

Despite the multiple negatives to ability grouping, it is apparent that this is still used frequently in schools. In 1990, Epstein and Mac Iver reported that of 1,753 middle schools, 20% assigned all students to their classes based on ability grouping, and 40% used some measure of ability grouping (Mills, 1998). The purpose of the following

survey is to determine whether there has been improvement in this area, or if research is still not being implemented to help our schools maintain high standards.

### The Study

It is important for schools to provide the best possible education for students. An important issue to be addressed in obtaining this education is utilizing the appropriate practices that are determined through educational research.

This particular study was done solely to focus on the teaching practices being executed in the elementary classroom. The levels of education included in this study are kindergarten through sixth grade. The outcome will provide knowledge of teaching techniques that are the most advocated by teachers for giving the elementary student a high level of education.

The subject population for this study contains elementary school teachers, both male and female, with any number of years of experience. They were asked to volunteer their time to complete a survey, which contained twelve multiple choice questions, with comments being optional. The research was conducted through e-mails sent to individuals' e-mail addresses. All survey results were obtained from instructors currently teaching in towns in Ohio and Indiana. These towns include; Muncie, Indiana, Winchester, Indiana, Union City, Indiana, Union City, Ohio, Greenville, Ohio, and others. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix A.

## Results of the Study

### Totals from Survey Results

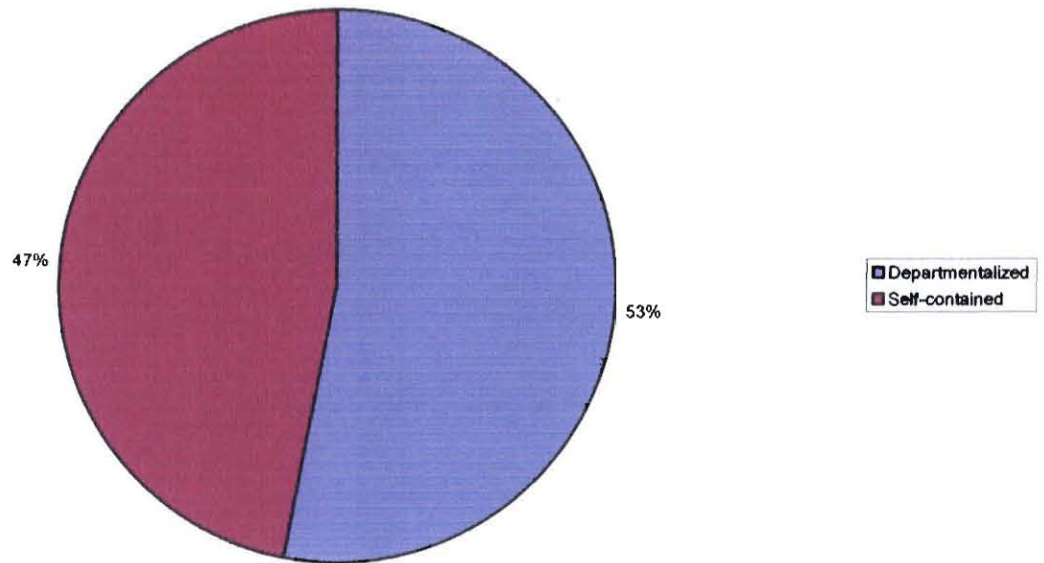
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
<b>Should grades K-3 be departmentalized?</b>	12%	56%	32%	n/a
<b>Should grades 4-6 be departmentalized?</b>	85%	0%	15%	n/a
<b>Are your classes ability grouped?</b>	9%	38%	n/a	53%
<b>Do you think that ability grouping is effective?</b>	44%	18%	38%	n/a

The table above shows the percentage results from the survey responses that were received. This table indicates that 12% of the participants believed that kindergarten through third grade should be departmentalized, while 85% stated that grades four through six should be departmentalized. Another fact that is observed, is when asked if grades four through six should be departmentalized, none of the participants answered “no”. The majority believe these grades should be departmentalized, and only 15% were not sure. This concept is interesting, because the research shows that self-contained classrooms provide higher achievement, even for the upper elementary grades. One participant who stated that departmentalization should be practiced in fourth through sixth grades added, “I think that this helps to prepare children for future grades. Also, with all of the state standards, it is almost necessary to be able to cover everything effectively.” This comment appears to be a common opinion stated by participants. Prevalent opinions can also be noted when instructors were questioned about departmentalizing kindergarten through third grade. One teacher remarked, “I don’t

think it should be. I used to teach 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and you need to be able to fit in reading, math, and writing all throughout the day. You also get to know the strengths and weaknesses of your class better if you have them all the time. I also believe that many children would not be able to function very well if they had to change classes. They need a more stable environment with one teacher.” A second participant echoed this thought and added to it by stating, “The students need to learn organizational skills in one place before being expected to move from room to room. Also, so many of our children in an urban setting have little to no stability in their home lives, that I think they need a cushion of stability, same expectations, acclimation to school in a more nurturing, comfortable environment with one person.” These statements relay that teacher opinions and practices agree with research results for lower elementary students. However, the upper elementary still uses departmentalization despite research results. As stated by participants, this may be a result of a new emphasis on state standards and standardized testing. This is a factor that greatly affects teachers’ opinions and teaching styles.

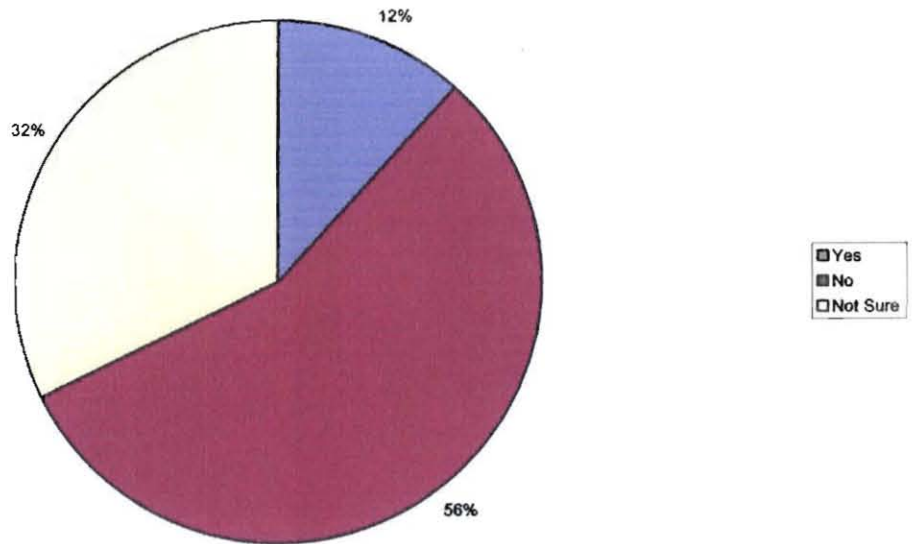
The results on ability grouping are rather remarkable and can best be seen through a graph. Graphs are provided on the following pages, showing the results for each question.

**Participants' Classroom Settings**

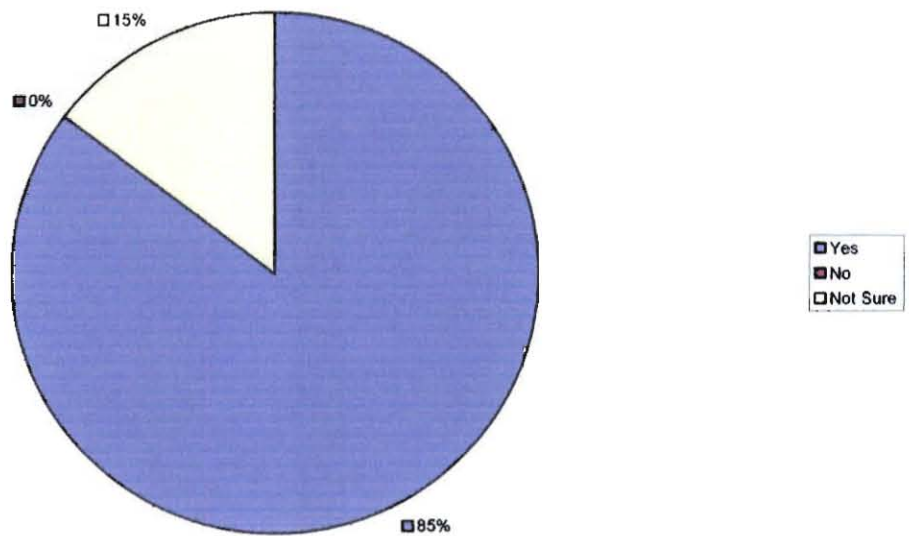


The table above shows that 53% of the participants are in departmentalized classrooms, while 47% are in self-contained classrooms. The following graphs will show these participants' beliefs on departmentalization. These were discussed on pages nine and ten.

Should K-3 Be Departmentalized?

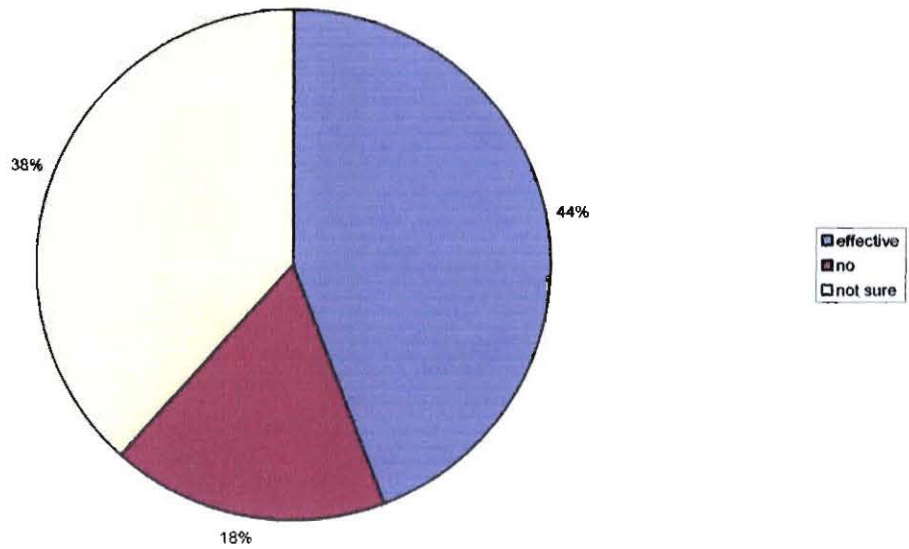


Should 4-6 Be Departmentalized?

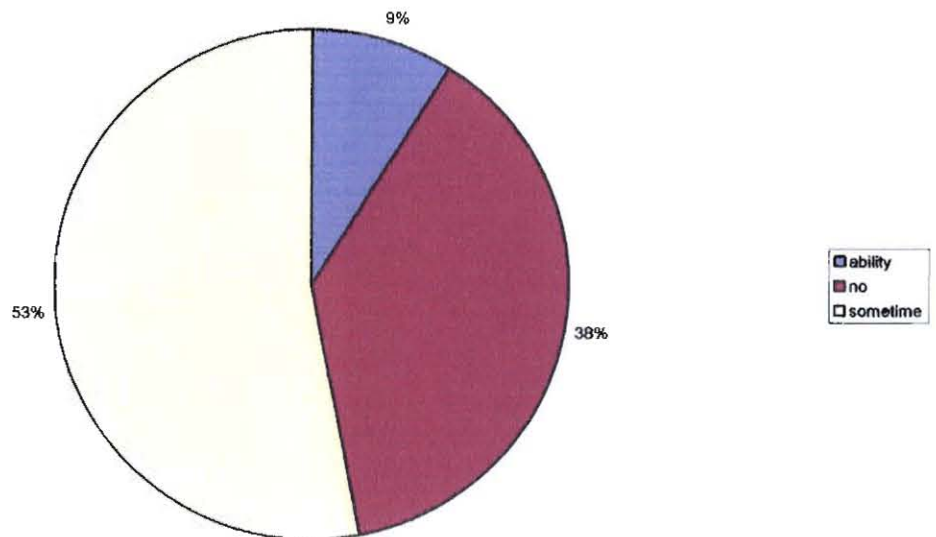


These pie graphs show the results on ability grouping and are discussed on the next page.

**Effectiveness of Ability Grouping**



**Use of Ability Grouping**





As can be perceived through the pie graphs on ability grouping, over half of the participants use ability grouping some, or all of the time, in their classrooms. At the same time, over half stated that ability grouping is not effective, or they are not sure of its effectiveness. What this reveals is that a majority of the instructors in this survey follow a teaching strategy that they believe to not be effective. Perhaps, this is the beginning of a shift in education. Ability grouping has been used for many years. As teachers' opinions change, possibly their practices will begin to change, as well. One participant acknowledged, "Depending on the need for enrichment or reinforcement, I feel that grouping sometimes hinders certain groups of students. While it gives other groups of students an 'I'm better than you ego'." An instructor who believes that ability grouping is effective stated, "The positive things about ability grouping in language arts is that when you are only working with one group of children with close to the same ability you can work on their particular needs and not worry about trying to meet another group's needs." Another teacher pointed out, "Students learn from one another. The lower students need to hear the ideas and thinking of the higher students. The lower students, also, have their strengths to share."

These comments indicate that there are still a wide variety of opinions and beliefs about ability grouping. The quantitative results show that very few instructors use ability grouping for all their classes. The majority employ it some of the time, but even those who do, are not sure of its effectiveness, and comment that they do not think it is a good teaching strategy.

After examining the totals based on all survey results, the participants were separated into groups to formulate comparisons. The first comparison is between

kindergarten to second grade teachers, third to fourth grade teachers, and fifth to sixth grade teachers. These results are presented on the following table.

### Totals by Grade Level

	<b>K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher responses</b>			<b>3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher responses</b>			<b>5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher responses</b>		
	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes
<b>Should grades K-3 be departmentalized?</b>	18%	46%	36%	10%	40%	50%	8%	77%	15%
<b>Should grades 4-6 be departmentalized?</b>	91%	0%	9%	90%	0%	10%	77%	0%	23%
<b>Are your classes ability grouped?</b>	0%	36%	64%	0%	70%	30%	23%	15%	62%
<b>Do you think that ability grouping is effective?</b>	36%	9%	55%	40%	40%	20%	54%	8%	38%

As depicted, the majority of fifth and sixth grade teachers see ability grouping as effective. Furthermore, this is the only group of instructors who use ability grouping for all their classes. The results indicate that all the fifth and sixth grade teachers surveyed are in a departmentalized setting, while the majority of the kindergarten through fourth grade teachers are in self-contained classrooms. This may signify that ability grouping is more likely to be used in departmentalized classrooms. These instructors also gave the strongest opinions against departmentalizing kindergarten through third grade. As one teacher in this group stated, “Younger students need to make a connection with their teacher, get organized, and feel comfortable in the school setting. This would be too difficult if students were switching classes.”

Another notable factor imparted on this table is that third and fourth grade teachers are the least likely to use ability grouping. In addition, 40% of the teachers in this group stated that ability grouping was not effective, compared to 9% of the kindergarten to second grade teachers, and 8% of the fifth to sixth grade teachers.

The second comparison results are based on years of experience. The results were separated according to teachers with zero to three years of experience, four to ten years of experience, and eleven or more years. These results are shown on the following table.

### Totals based on Years of Experience

	0-3 Years of Experience			4-10 Years of Experience			11 or more Years of Experience		
	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes
<b>Should grades K-3 be departmentalized?</b>	0%	67%	33%	18%	55%	27%	10%	55%	35%
<b>Should grades 4-6 be departmentalized?</b>	100%	0%	0%	91%	0%	9%	80%	0%	20%
<b>Are your classes ability grouped?</b>	0%	67%	33%	0%	18%	82%	15%	45%	40%
<b>Do you think that ability grouping is effective?</b>	67%	0%	33%	45%	10%	45%	40%	25%	35%

One of the most noticeable facts on this table is that the instructors with zero to three years of experience are the least likely to use ability grouping. Despite this, they have the highest rating of effectiveness for ability grouping. Although they do believe in the effectiveness of ability grouping, they are not likely to use it. This may reflect the fact that they have recently graduated from college and have learned through their education that ability grouping is not an effective teaching strategy. They may be more

inclined to state that it is effective, because they do not use ability grouping and do not have the experience with it to affect their opinion.

All instructors with zero to three years of experience were against departmentalizing kindergarten through third grade, while they were for departmentalizing fourth through sixth grades. Again, this may reflect their recent college education.

The instructors with four to ten years of experience were most likely to use ability grouping some of the time, while those with eleven or more years of experience were the only ones to use ability grouping all of the time. These results may also be a sign of the teacher's college education. It may also disclose that those who have been teaching longer are in the habit of employing strategies that they have always practiced and are comfortable with. However, with teachers who have four to ten years of experience, 45% believed that ability grouping is effective, and 40% of those with eleven or more years believed it was effective. Even though these numbers are large, this indicates that the majority do not think ability grouping is effective. This, also, may demonstrate that as teachers have more experience, their opinions are beginning to change, and changes in their teaching strategies may soon follow. As one teacher with eleven or more years of experience stated, "I see both advantages and disadvantages. I think it works best in math, but I don't see its advantages as much in science and social studies. In fact, I think it would be more of a benefit for those two areas to not be grouped with all the high kids put into one." Another instructor made the statement that, "At the k-3 level, what you are seeing is that many times children simply haven't been exposed to something versus a lack of intelligence. We also know now that there are several types of intelligences, so

on what basis would you ability group? In addition, we all need to learn how to tolerate others' differences and get along. The elementary classroom is a good place to begin that process." This statement indicates that teachers' opinions and use of ability grouping may also be changing based on newer developments in the education field, such as the theory of multiple intelligences. Although the teachers with more experience had different opinions and teaching strategies, these statements suggest that they also stay up-to-date on research and are willing to change.

The following table compares the survey results of rural school teachers to those of urban and suburban school teachers.

### **Totals Based on School Settings**

	<b>Rural School Teachers</b>			<b>Urban &amp; Suburban School Teachers</b>		
	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes
<b>Should grades K-3 be departmentalized?</b>	7%	57%	36%	33%	50%	17%
<b>Should grades 4-6 be departmentalized?</b>	89%	0%	11%	67%	0%	33%
<b>Are your classes ability grouped?</b>	11%	35%	54%	0%	50%	50%
<b>Do you think that ability grouping is effective?</b>	50%	18%	32%	17%	17%	66%

A remarkable fact on this table is that ability grouping was used full-time only in rural school settings. Ability grouping is used by 65% of the rural school teachers, some of the time. Compared to this, only 50% of urban/suburban school teachers use ability grouping, and none of these teachers use ability grouping for all of their classes. Also,

50% of the rural school teachers stated that ability grouping was effective, while only 17% of the urban/suburban school teachers thought that it was. This may give evidence that rural schools are slower to change than urban schools. As one rural school teacher commented about ability grouping, “You can hit skills struggling students need. Advanced students get pushed/challenged.” However, not all rural teachers agreed with this opinion. As one teacher stated, “You can differentiate to meet the students’ needs. I don’t always think it is necessary to ability group. Students need their peers as role models. They learn so much from one another!” Another instructor noted, “I don’t see the benefits for putting all the ‘low’ students in one class and all the ‘high’ students in another. I firmly believe that there needs to be ‘high’ role models in the ‘low’ group to help challenge those students. Plus, as a teacher I wouldn’t want all ‘low’ or all ‘high’, I would want a mix of students. The ‘low’ students have just as much to offer as the ‘high’ and they all need to learn at their pace/ability.”

The urban teachers also had comments about ability grouping. One teacher stated, “I don’t think it [ability grouping] is great for the low readers, they don’t have the positive role model of the higher students but it does make my teaching easier.” Another instructor in an urban setting remarked, “Sometimes yes, sometimes not. It has to be flexible and the students have to feel comfortable in their group and not feel like they are in the ‘dumb’ or ‘smart’ group. I also think there needs to be plenty of time when they are not in those groups. I believe that kids can learn from each other and if low achieving students see how higher achievers solve a problem, they can learn from that.”

As these comments suggest, teachers have similar opinions and beliefs across a variety of settings. Despite the differences in schools and classrooms, and the differences described in the percentages, common views and attitudes can be noticed throughout.

The final table makes a comparison on the use of ability grouping in self-contained classrooms versus the use of ability grouping in departmentalized classrooms. As was mentioned earlier, there appears to be a correlation between these factors.

### **Use of Ability Grouping in Departmentalized Classrooms vs. Self-Contained Classrooms**

	<b>Departmentalized Classrooms</b>			<b>Self-Contained Classrooms</b>		
	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes	Yes	No	Not Sure /Sometimes
<b>Are your classes ability grouped?</b>	17%	28%	55%	0%	50%	50%
<b>Do you think that ability grouping is effective?</b>	50%	17%	33%	37%	19%	44%

The observation of this chart reveals that 17% of the departmentalized classrooms that were part of this survey use ability grouping for all their classes, while none of the self-contained classrooms use ability grouping full-time. Also noted from this chart is that departmentalized classroom teachers perceive ability grouping as more effective, than those with self-contained classrooms. As one teacher in a departmentalized setting stated, "When teachers specialize in one area they are more equipped to address all levels of the content areas." Another departmentalized teacher added, "For fifth grade, I think this is very effective because the material covered is more difficult than earlier grades and the teachers can become more 'expert' in what they are teaching."

In opposition to this, an instructor in a self-contained classroom commented, “With being self-contained, I can make a unit that crosses all the subject areas, so that the teaching and learning is continuous throughout the day/week/month. I also do a little ability grouping for reading, but it is very flexible. I feel that the students can learn as much from each other as they can from me. With having the same class all day, I know them very well and get to see strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum. If I only taught one subject that a particular student had great difficulty with, I may never see his/her strengths.”

After investigating the total results of this survey, it can be determined that strategies proven to be effective through research are not being followed in these schools. The use of self-contained classrooms is prevalent in kindergarten through third grade, however, it is not as common in the upper grades. Departmentalization is used most often for grades four through six, despite the fact that research asserts that self-contained classrooms provide higher achievement. Two common reasons were mentioned throughout by instructors teaching in departmentalized settings. One reason was that in the upper grades the material becomes more difficult, and it is easier for a teacher to become an expert in one subject. The second reason is that departmentalization prepares students for junior high and high school settings. Considering that 85% of the participants declared that departmentalization should be used in grades four through six, this does not appear to be a strategy that will be changing, despite the research.

Ability grouping was a more controversial topic in this survey. Forty-four percent of the participants believe ability grouping is effective, and ability grouping is used by some of the participants in every category. As was stated previously, there are very few



benefits to ability grouping. However, it is still being used frequently in schools. The reasons given for this reflect the perceived benefits listed earlier of being able to teach to one level at a time, and to not hold back the high students.

These conclusions and the teachers' comments show that research results are not being advocated in the schools, and ineffective strategies are still being followed. Despite many teachers' opinions that ability grouping is not effective, it is still used regularly. This established that changes need to be made in our schools, including making instructors aware of the research. It is important for teachers to understand what the research proves. Perhaps, if explanations as to why certain strategies are ineffective are given, and instructors view studies which prove this, they will be more likely to change their teaching strategies.

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## **Appendix A**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. What grade level do you teach?

- a. K-2
- b. 3-4
- c. 5-6

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

- a. 0-3
- b. 4-10
- c. 11 or more

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. How many students are in your class?

- a. 10-15
- b. 16-20
- c. 21-28

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. How many students are in your grade level?

- a. 25-30
- b. 31-60
- c. 61-80

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 5.. Is your school in a rural or urban setting?

- a. Rural
- b. Urban
- c. Suburban

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Is your grade level departmentalized (switch classes) or self-contained?

- a. Departmentalized
- b. self-contained
- c. self-contained & ability grouped

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Do you think that this form of teaching is effective? Why or why not?

- a. Effective
- b. Ineffective
- c. Not sure

Comments:

\_\_\_\_ 8. Do you think departmentalization should be used in K-3? Why or why not?  
a. Yes  
b. No  
c. Not sure  
Comments:

\_\_\_\_ 9. Do you think departmentalization should be used in 4-6? Why or why not?  
a. Yes  
b. No  
c. Not sure  
Comments:

\_\_\_\_ 10. Are your classes or classroom grouped according to ability?  
a. Yes  
b. No  
c. Sometimes  
Comments:

\_\_\_\_ 11. Do you think that ability grouping for the purpose of instruction is effective? Why or why not?  
a. Yes  
b. No  
c. Not sure  
Comments:

\_\_\_\_ 12. Would you consider describing your classroom approach in depth?  
a. Yes  
b. No  
Comments regarding my classroom approach is: